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# Transcript: Mayor de Blasio Holds Media Availability

June 5, 2020

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everybody. Yesterday afternoon, my wife Chirlane and I went to a very moving memorial. As the funeral of George Floyd was beginning. People gathered in Brooklyn to honor George Floyd, to honor his life, his memory, to not let him have died in vain. His brother Terrance was at the Memorial, and we could see the deep pain he was feeling. That whole family is feeling. We have to hold them in our thoughts and prayers. And I could see the raw pain and anger in the crowd gathered. I felt it, I heard it. People who've seen injustice before our very eyes, and can't live with it. And I said, even though the crowd was angry and hurt and unquestionably doubting, whether there could or would be change I said it is incumbent upon me and everyone in leadership to not just say words about change, but to produce change, and show people that we can have a better and more just society. It begins with all of us who you have chosen to lead to actually create that new reality. It cannot just be rhetoric. Rhetoric will be seen through quickly. It should not be just words. It should be actions. So, I said yesterday, and I say it again today, you will see change in this city. You will see change in the NYPD. We simply have not gone far enough. This status quo is still broken. It must change. I'm not going to forget all the progress that has been made. And it is in so many ways important and evident, but it's not enough. And people will know in their hearts when things have been made right. That's the moment I have to get us to more and more every single day. They will know when there is more justice. They will know when there is more fairness. They will know when people in this city, can walk down the street and feel they are safe from crime, but they also are not going to be disrespected, because of who they are. We are not there yet and we have to get there. So, this will be the work for the next year and a half of this administration to make more change, to make it urgently, to make it powerfully, to make it clear. And that work will proceed immediately. And you will see those results. And you'll judge for yourself as all New Yorkers do. But even though we say that phrase, words matter, and words do matter, actions matter more, and that's what we have to achieve.

So, let's talk about yesterday, last night, and also what we have to do. There were protests over Europe city during the day, they were overwhelmingly peaceful. Some proceeded into the night, also overwhelmingly peaceful. There are things we need to address. There are things we need to fix in the

NYPD, but the overall restraint levels were clear. And I always express my appreciation to the men and women of the NYPD for the work that they do. And we need that restraint. We expect that restraint. That is the instruction that all officers have been given. There were those overwhelmingly peaceful protests. There were few or no attacks on property. There were however, some attempts at violence. And this is the point I always want to make to people. We've got a very few mingled in among the peaceful protesters who aim to do violence. Their methods are systematic. I have asked the NYPD to keep providing the information, what we're seeing here, what we're seeing around the country about that very systematic attempt to foster violence. We will not accept that. Every single time we'll intervene to stop that. We also saw in the midst of what was undoubtedly overwhelmingly, what we want to see, an overwhelmingly peaceful night, peaceful protest, little or no property damage, efforts and violence sorted. These are all very good and important things. We saw some things that weren't so good, and I want to make sure those are addressed. First of all, there is no circumstance in which a member of the news media should ever be arrested by the NYPD or any other police organization. If you said to me, well, what if that person overtly went out and committed a crime, obviously then they're committing a crime, they're not doing their job as a member of the news media. That is a different matter. What I'm concerned about is when news media is out there doing their job, reporting, looking at the truth, whether it's convenient or inconvenient truth, their right to do their job must be protected at all times. That is as clear as a bell in our constitution. So, I don't know why we've seen here, and in other parts of the country instances where members of the media that were arrested, that is unacceptable and that needs to stop. And it's clear that that is one of the underpinnings of a free society. Also, want to make clear, this curfew was brought together very quickly in an emergency situation. The message from the beginning was essential workers doing their job in the middle of doing their work are exempted from the curfew. And I want to make that clear to people. The curfew is only going on for a few more nights, but essential workers are essential workers. Any essential worker doing their job is exempted from the curfew. And we are making that abundantly clear to everyone, to the essential workers themselves, and to the NYPD.

Each night, we see a lot of good work. Each night, we see some progress towards our goal of getting back to a fully peaceful circumstance so we can move forward. Because, phase one, the restart of our city begins Monday. That's where we're supremely focused to start moving us forward. But each night we see certainly several situations that raise real questions. Individual instances, where our officers take an action that raises a valid concern. In each and every case, there must be a full investigation, and where discipline is warranted, it needs to be speedy. I've had this conversation with Commissioner Shea. We are working together to ensure that the past history where internal discipline of the NYPD was slow. We're not doing that anymore, we have to move past that. Commissioner Shea spoke passionately yesterday about his desire to heal, to bring police and community together, to continue that progress. And to make clear to people, there are consequences when something has done wrong. The vast, vast majority of officers do their job, do it right, but when someone does something wrong, as in all of our society, there must be consequences. Commissioner Shea made clear yesterday, disciplinary actions are about to be announced. Some will include suspensions of officers. There's a lot going on, but one thing that has to happen is people need to see. The people of this city need to see that when an officer does something wrong, it is investigated. If it is found to be true that something wrong was done, there must be consequences, and they must be swift. That is one of the ways to restore trust and begin the process of moving us forward. And that is what we will do.

Now, let me go back to the big picture here. We're addressing right now, a deep concern, a deep set of concerns about policing, about structural racism, about the history of racism in policing. And those are very real and well-documented concerns. And we have to keep weeding out that racism. We have to end that history, even though it hangs over so heavily. That we'll take a better disciplinary system. That will take more transparency. That will take better efforts to screen out officers who don't belong on the force

or remove officers that don't belong on the force. And that work will actually help us to move forward, because neighborhood policing has worked. Neighborhood policing has created a deeper bond between police and community. We've seen it many, many ways. We've seen the way it helps us drive down crimes. Reducing arrest has worked. Reducing incarceration has worked. We've got a lot we have to do together, but it begins with restoring faith that there will be transparency, and there will be justice. And then that's the platform upon which we can build much deeper reforms. I want us to get to the day where no one wonders if they're being treated differently because of the color of their skin. We are not there to say the least, we have to get there. But again, it's not about words. People will know it. If they start to experience something differently, young men came up to me over the years, and told me how different it was to not be stopped all the time. Stop and frisk was a horrible stain on this city. Hundreds of thousands of young people in a given year treated like criminals, even though they hadn't done anything. Devalued young men of color, the future of this city, devalued. Treated with disrespect. That was broken. We fixed that. And I've heard from those who used to experience that disrespect, how much better it feels to just be able to walk down the street, go to school, go to work, be treated with dignity and decency. We've got a lot more to do. That should be every encounter that a citizen of this city has with the NYPD. That's what we strive for. But in the meantime, we've got huge inequities we have to address. Not just in policing, in our economy, in our health care system, everything laid bare by the coronavirus epidemic. And right now, we must address those disparities. We must keep our city safe in this moment of this pandemic. We have to restart our economy. Wherever I go, people talk about how fearful they are for their health, for their family's health, but also, because they're running out of money or they already have run out of money. How are they going to pay the rent? How are they going to pay for food? How are they going to pay for medications? We have to fight back this disease more. We cannot take our eye off the ball.

So, Monday is the restart, and that will be something that allow us to get people back their livelihoods, but we'll also come— with challenges of fighting back this disease. What does it come down to? If we're going to fight this disease, it is once again about that word you've heard so many times testing, testing, testing, testing. That is a way forward, then tracing following up on everyone who was in contact with someone who tested positive so much to do, to make sure we keep people safe, but this is our focus right now. Last week, we had a day where 33,000 people got tested in one day in New York City, the highest we've had since the beginning of this crisis, we intend to keep building that number up to at least 50,000 a day.

Now, the message is I want every New Yorker to get tested and more and more testing capacity is out there in your community. Go take advantage of it, it will help us to move forward. Today we announced something really important that will be mobile testing in New York City— mobile diagnostic testing. So, you can literally stay in your neighborhood, and the testing trucks come to you. We're starting in two neighborhoods next week, Soundview in the Bronx and Kew Gardens in Queens, and they'll be moving around in neighborhoods all over the City. This is an idea that came out of the work within this city government, our task force on racial equity and inclusion, our center for community and faith partnerships, our leaders in this administration talking to community members saying, what do you need? What would help? And people said, mobile testing. We need it in neighborhoods hit hard, we need it so that people can more easily connect with testing. We need to remind people, it is always free, it's easy, it's fast, and it's coming to you. Two trucks next week, we're going to ramp up to 10 trucks in the next few weeks. They can do 80 tests per day, excuse me, 80 tests per day per truck. So, 800 more tests per day because of the trucks. And again, whether it's one of the trucks or one of the hundred and 80 centers that we now are putting up or have up, you can get a free test by going to [nyc.gov/CovidTest](https://nyc.gov/CovidTest) or calling 3-1-1.

Final point on this, if you have been at one of these protests, I want to strongly urge you to get tested. It has been a real concern that people have gathered in close proximity. I understood, and I understand still this painful, real moment in history, but I want to keep reminding people. It is dangerous to be close together and people must keep social distance, and we got to get back to that clear understanding. We're going have to hold that clear understanding social distancing, face coverings, we got to get back to that discipline. So, if you have been in a protest, I strongly urge you to get tested.

Now, fighting disparity means focusing on the hardest hit neighborhoods, fighting disparity means providing more to those neighborhoods all the time. These neighborhoods are filled with people who have done the work that built the city over generations, but have never reaped the rewards of their labors. We have so much more to do to create fairness and redistribute the wealth of this city, to the places that actually built that wealth, but weren't rewarded. So, one of the ways we do that is through a strong public health care system, 11 hospitals, 70 clinics that serve the people of city, regardless of ability to pay. We've got to strengthen that system, we invested in it years ago to save it. That became a crucial element of how we were able to save many lives at the height of this crisis and help push back this disease, now we need to go on the offensive and deepen our investments in communities. Once again, our taskforce on racial equity and inclusion, push this notion hard that we need tangible impacts now to address disparity, not in the future now. And so, the task force insisted that we look at how to speed up all of our plans and make sure that real investments happen in communities right now that will help people get more health care. There's a specific new initiative called Centers of Excellence, and this will mean that three new ambulatory care facilities will be built in neighborhoods that need it in New York City. In Elmhurst Queens, I don't think I have to say anything more, after what we saw happen at Elmhurst Hospital, Tremont the Bronx, Bushwick and Brooklyn. Centers of Excellence, they were supposed to be something in the future, now they will be open this September. The task force made the point, this is why I named the task force speed intensity, redistribution, focus on impact now in communities that are hurting. these centers of excellence will provide a wide range of health care, they'll focus on COVID, fighting COVID, they'll focus on making sure that respiratory diseases are addressed. they'll make sure that people not only get physical health care, but mental health care as well. Tens of thousands of people per year will benefit, construction is beginning immediately. And I want to thank, of course, the Racial Equity and Inclusion Task Force, I want to thank Health and Hospitals. I want to thank our Department of Design and Construction, that's doing amazing work, extraordinarily fast work. These three centers will be opened this September and many, many people will benefit, and it will help us fight back this disease, but it will also help us fight back that deeper health care disparities.

Now, getting people back to their livelihood, that's what phase one is about. Getting New York City back on its path, to being strong again, to our economy being strong to our people, having what they need. Three days from now, phase one begins, one of the big pieces of phase one is construction, 32,000 construction sites will reopen. Some magnitude is a reminder, as recently as February, how vibrant the economy of this city was and how vibrant it will be again, 32,000 construction sites will come back. That means a lot of New Yorkers will come back to work, but it has to be safe, has to be healthy, that is the bottom line. Every site has to be ready and we're going to make sure it's ready, the guidelines are clear. You go to [nyc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.nyc.gov/coronavirus), every single company can see and working people can see what those standards of healthy, safe work would be, and we are going to protect every single worker. Department of Buildings will be out inspecting the sites constantly, every single one, making sure their social distancing, proper hygiene rules, hand sanitizer, face coverings, you name it. For the first 30 days, I want this to be very clear to all the owners and managers of the companies involved in these construction sites. For the first 30 days, we will educate, we will constantly monitor, we will help you to ensure what you're doing is safe. Our department of buildings will be there to help, not to fine to help, but if after 30 days of nonstop engagement, you are not doing what you need to do, then the fines begin. I don't want



to give a single fine, I don't want to take money from anyone unless you are ignoring the health and safety needs of your workers.

Let's now talk about our thresholds and in general, the news is good, but this is going to be something we will be talking about for days and weeks ahead. And we're going to watch when we see something that isn't as good and make sure it does not turn into a larger trend. So, indicator number one, daily number of people admitted to hospitals for a suspected COVID-19. That was only 48 yesterday, today we saw a jump I don't like that, It's 84 today. Now 84 is still well within our 200-person threshold, but that's a meaningful movement in one day, we're going to keep a close eye on that. We need to stay under 200 to keep sustaining phase one and to move on to phase two. Daily number of people in our Health and Hospitals ICUs is under threshold today, 344 against the threshold of 375. Percentage of people tested positive for COVID citywide, well within under our threshold of 15 percent, that number today is four percent, that's a very good number. So overwhelmingly good results based on all of your hard work, but we got to hold the line, we cannot loosen up because these numbers start to move in the wrong direction, we're going to talk about it. If ever to move in the wrong direction, we're going to talk about it, they move too much in the wrong direction, we then can't keep moving forward on our plan for reopening. So, we have to be clear about holding the line.

A few words in Spanish –

With that we turned to our colleagues in the media and please make sure I know the name and outlet of each journalist.

**Moderator:** Hi, all just a reminder that we have Deputy Mayor Perea-Henze, Police Commissioner Shea, and Buildings Commissioner La Rocca on the phone. With that I will start with Jillian from WBAI.

**Question:** Morning, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Hey Jillian, how are you? How's it going?

**Question:** I'm okay. How are you?

**Mayor:** Good.

**Question:** Yeah. Yeah, I'm playing devil's advocate. Some of those unprovoked attacks on cops didn't necessarily happen in a vacuum, they started covering policing in the city's communities of color. In about four years ago, based on NYCLU research in 2018, so well into your tenure, they released a report analyzing these disparate methods that included what they call constant police interference and over surveillance using things like giant watchtowers and high tech equipment from the military, roughly two thirds surveyed said they feared someone close would be killed by police. Have you done or will do to address the power militarization of the police force? My second question is in Tuesday's briefing, you said more of the forces made up of city residents and the NYPD now is majority people of color, which you reiterated yesterday since there is no city residency requirement for the NYPD. What are the actual numbers? Thanks.

**Mayor:** Thank you, Jillian. Excellent questions, I appreciate it very much. Commissioner Shea may, and I'll turn to in a moment, may know the exact numbers and if he does, great, and if not, we will get it to you. But Jillian, I really appreciate the question, I'll be quick, but you're raising like big, important themes that we don't actually talk enough about in this city. On the question of the composition of our police force, six and a half years, I've been in, I've seen a striking evolution change, and I think it's a healthy change, more and more city residents proportionately within our police force. More and more people of

color reflecting who we are as New York City. That is only one piece of a much bigger equation, but I think it's important, and I think it means that more and more people who've lived the life of the community will be protecting communities more and more people who will rise up to leadership will come from the communities that reflect this City. But we need to give you all of those facts, and I think we should have a more public discussion about it because it actually is something important and indicates progress.

On the excellent question about where we go in terms of the approach to policing; neighborhood policing is the renunciation of militarization. Neighborhood policing is the opposite of what we saw most vividly in Ferguson. Neighborhood policing is about people who connect, officers who connect at the community level; stay in a community, get to know people, give community residents their cell phone, their email address, humanly build relationships of respect, work from the perspective of an attitude of de-escalation and mutual effort. We have a long way to go to make that real, but when you do see militarization, it backfires consistently. And therefore, in the context of the last week, I've scrupulously said, keep the National Guard out of New York City because we do not want a military presence in this city and, thank God, we did keep them out. No disrespect to the men and women of the National Guard, but we need to de-escalate; having armed military presence doesn't help you do it. Some cities have used tear gas, some cities have used rubber bullets, things like that – we don't do that, we won't do that. We need to keep reducing wherever we can any of those vestiges. The watchtowers are a very good example of the complexity because I've talked to plenty of people in communities who want them because it makes them feel more secure, but I also understand your point, how can we create an ideal dynamic where it's not needed? And I actually think it is about deepening neighborhood policing, making policing not something from outside, disconnected or in any way oppressive; making something of and by and for the community and working with the community. And more and more we're seeing this Jillian, the community is part of policing. This is the philosophy we're working on. It is, it is block associations, its everyday people, tenant and resident associations in NYCHA - it is a cure violence movement. This is, to me, all of that is the hope of the future for how you create a safer city where you don't need the same kind of police presence anymore. So that's where we're moving more and more and we'll have more to say on that for sure, but that's where we're moving. Commissioner off-hand do you know the exact numbers in terms of people of color on the force? If not, we will get that back to Jillian later.

**Commissioner Shea:** Jillian, you can reach out to DCPI and for the exact numbers. I don't want to – I don't want to be giving you bad information. I can tell you that in terms of minority representation on the department, on the uniformed police officers' side, it's over 50 percent. When you look at the department as a whole, including the civilians I can tell you that it's well over 50 percent live within the city. So, there's a lot of different numbers here, DCPI can you know, really provide you the most up to date. And on the issue of the paramilitary, you know, I've seen a lot of these same reports and there's value in all of them and different opinions, but I can tell you with 100 percent clarity; I've attended thousands of community meetings in the last 29 years and there is a consistent request for more police in the communities. So, I don't know where the author of the report lives, but that's what happens at the grassroots level, at the community meetings, where we meet with the community and trying to solve problems together.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

**Moderator:** Next we have Julia from the Post.

**Question:** Hey, Mr. Mayor. Good morning. Good morning, everyone on the panel. Just a little housekeeping. I'd like to start by saying that I believe reporters should have a chance to ask follow-up questions as routine at press conferences to assure that their questions are answered. And then I'd like

to go on and ask my questions – do you believe that the protests are the cause of the hospital admissions nearly doubling overnight? If not, what's driving the spike? And then how far are you willing to go in terms of cutting the NYPD's budget? Several Council members on both sides of the aisle have said the cuts are inevitable. Do you support the five percent to seven percent that Speaker Johnson and Council Members Dromm and Gibson are asking for?

**Mayor:** On the hospital admissions, we do not see evidence, Julia, that it's related to something that's happened only over the last week, just because of the time it takes for the disease to manifest. We're going to watch that very, very carefully. I'll certainly be talking to our health care team, but I would be surprised if that's what's causing it. I think we're much more likely in the next week to 10 days to see a manifestation if there is one, but whatever's causing that Julia, I take it very seriously that we can sustain that level, but we cannot sustain if it keeps going up and up and surpasses the threshold.

On the budget, now look, I start from this perspective; first of all, the biggest problem for all of us is that all our agencies may be about to be cut and cut radically if we don't get the stimulus bill from Washington and if we don't get the borrowing authority from Albany – it will lead to major cuts across all city agencies. And that's what every single one of us should be very concerned about because that's going to hurt the quality of life in New York City a lot. That's going to make a lot of people lose their jobs. It's a horrible scenario; we have to fight against that every day. I've heard the vision that those have who want to reduce funding for the police. We're going to work with the City Council as always, but the concern I always raise back is we must keep this city safe. We have to do it a smart way. We have to keep our commitment to neighborhood policing, which is a labor-intensive approach. So, I am concerned that whatever we do, it cannot take away the progress we've made and it can't take us backwards or, you know, address one problem and create a new problem. That's the balance I'm concerned about.

**Moderator:** Next we have Reuben from Hamodia.

**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor. First of all, I agree with Julia. I request that we allow follow-ups, even if it means only one question for reporters or just to make sure because sometimes reporters feel the questions aren't answered properly. Thanks. Now that it's a week after the protests have been gone. I'm wondering if you can please release extensive statistics. How many people were arrested, how many stores were smashed, how many officers were injured? My second question is this, the Supreme Court has said that any first amendment regulations must be viewpoint neutral. And you've specifically stated this week that these protesters are quote, not the same question, unquote, as other gatherings because of 400 years of American racism and therefore you're treating them differently than other gatherings. How does that square with the Supreme Court's requirement that regulations on the first amendment must be viewpoint neutral? Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Look, I'm not a lawyer, but I feel very strongly, Reuben, on the common sense point here, which is we are seeing a national historic moment of pain and anguish and, and a deep cry for help and a deep cry for change. It is not your everyday situation. When we were dealing with this virus in the beginning, we said very consistently across all communities, we want to avoid gatherings. I still want to avoid gatherings. I wanted the people to understand that one, protestors are making their voices heard; they're saying something very important. I'm hearing it loud and clear, change is going to happen. We have to show people that change, but not withstanding that this is a very particular moment. I still want to see people more and more choose to make their voices heard in other ways and not take the risk of gathering. And until we are out of the woods in this indicator today that you know is going in a wrong direction - as a reminder this - until we're out of the woods on this virus, we're still better off with people not coming out and gathering in this way. But you know, I, I am happy to have any discussion with anyone about why this is different than what we are dealing with day to day and why it has to be

understood and respected and people's sheer anger and fear and pain has to be expressed so we can get past it and make change and move forward in peace. The second part you're I think you're absolutely right, we need to list the number of people arrested, the officers injured for sure, and there've been too many officers by far injured and that story is not being told enough, the number of stores that were attacked. We need to put all this out and I'm sure the NYPD and other agencies will be doing that as quickly as we have those statistics; been a very painful week, but my job is to turn the page here the right way, the peaceful way and move us forward. And finally, I definitely heard what you and Julia said; we're talking about the right way to approach the press conferences going forward. Appreciate your point and we'll come back with more on that

**Moderator:** Next we have Katie from the Wall Street Journal.

**Question:** Hey, good morning, Mr. Mayor. Secondly, I third what Julia and Reuben asked. I won't say it for the interest of time and I have two questions. The first is for you and Commissioner Shea, if you could address why I know it's been addressed with the NYPD officers, I know they're wearing markers over their badges, but I think people are concerned that their numbers are covered-up, their, their numbers and their names are covered up, so if you can, so if you can explain. And then secondly, there's been calls across the city on various sides of the political aisle for you to resign. So, I wanted to give you the chance to address that. Thank you.

**Mayor:** Katie, that is the thing that people do who are not trying to deal with the fullness and the truth of the situation. I'm not going to dignify it. I was elected by the people of this city first time with 73 percent of the vote; the second time with 67 percent of the vote on a very clear agenda of change. We continue to move that agenda. Critics are going to be critics. What's clear here is we're dealing with an absolutely unprecedented crisis, literally more than this city has ever faced in its history and we're going to fight our way through it. We're going to get New York City back on its feet. We're going to keep people healthy, we're going to address disparities on fairness, we're going to recover better than ever. So the folks who want to criticize, God bless them. They're not actually doing the work. I am doing the work and we're going to move the city forward.

On the question of the markers over the badges allow me to make this personal. One of the stories that my daughter Chiara told me was the frustration that she had and other protesters had when they saw officers encounter them without their body camera on and they would call out to officers and say, you need to have your body cam on. I understand in the midst of a lot of activity, sometimes people might legitimately forget. But I want to be abundantly clear, police officers in the middle of dealing with a protest or any activity that is required, have to have their body cameras on, police officers have to have their name and badge visible, covering up your badge number or your name is absolutely inappropriate. I'll leave it to Commissioner Shea to determine the appropriate approach to ensuring that officers don't do that and that any who do have consequences, but it is just inappropriate. And it's part of public trust – the whole notion of why there is a badge number and a name to begin with is to – was many years ago determined to help create trust. The name helps to create humanity rather than just seeing someone in a uniform. There's a human being with a family and a history, and you want to have people connect on a human level, but it's also about accountability. And, and since we put body cameras in place, a lot of good accountability has come from that. A lot of instances has given us a truth that sometimes shows the officer did everything exactly right, despite allegation, or sometimes show an officer didn't do something right, and that's what we need to know. But absolute transparency – body cameras on when they're supposed to, badge number showing, name showing, no exceptions, and there has to be a clear way of ensuring that happens every time.

**Moderator:** Next we have Rich from WCBS 880.



**Question:** Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

**Mayor:** Hey, Rich. How are you doing?

**Question:** I'm doing okay. So, I'm just wondering – pardon me – there have been some calls for ending the curfew. Is there any contemplation of that at all? And can you tell us what took place in Mott Haven last night? There were a large number of arrests. Does anybody know what precipitated the action between the police and the demonstrators up there?

**Mayor:** Absolutely. I'll start on the first question and a quick point, on the second one, and then Commissioner Shea absolutely can go into detail. He and I spoke a lot about it last night. Honestly, I'm the person who made the decision on the curfew. I think if you look at the last three nights, the broad goals of the curfew have been achieved so far, ending any destruction of property, restoring peace, ensuring that whatever happened was peaceful and that if there was something that actually threatened people's peace and safety that it could be acted on more effectively. That's why we did the curfew. The last three nights and think have shown obviously very marked improvement before those – compared to those two very troubling nights before that came out of nowhere and were absolutely unacceptable. My plan is to continue the curfew throughout the week, as I originally stated, always looking, always evaluating each approach to see if there's any revisions need to be made. But my plan right now is to keep it going – Sunday – you know, Friday night, Saturday night, Sunday night, same schedule 8:00 PM to 5:00 AM. On Monday morning at 5:00 AM, curfew ends, does not come back if all goes well, and we go right into phase one of the restart. In terms of what happened in Mott Haven, this is something that the NYPD saw coming. An organization that literally was encouraging violence – and I don't know if the NYPD has put out some of the material, information we have, and I know there's always security and information, confidentiality issues – Commissioner Shea will speak to this, but I've seen with my own eyes the materials that were meant to encourage violence. And then, individuals appeared with tools of violence, with the intent to do violence in that community. And that's unacceptable. And that's exactly what we need the NYPD to intervene in and stop, and they did, and they did it effectively. Commissioner Shea?

**Commissioner Shea:** I think that, that's part of that story. I've just got to thank the executives on the ground that I have 100 percent confidence in, not only in Mott Haven, but throughout the city that did a phenomenal job the last couple of nights. In this particular incident, we had information regarding the intent to destroy property, to injure cops, to cause mayhem. And we had a plan which was executed nearly flawlessly in the Bronx. This wasn't, again, about protests. This was about tearing down society. We had firearm – a firearm recovered, gasoline recovered, numerous weapons recovered. And the best part of this story is that the members of the Bronx that were present at the scene, that live actually live in the Bronx, that came out to the scene and said, those people are not with us, and denounced them. So, to the men and women of the police department last night, and to the community members, again, that came together and got these outside agitators out before they could really cause significant damage – thank you.

**Moderator:** Next we have Jake from Gothamist.

**Question:** Hey, Mr. Mayor, and Police Commissioner, my questions are for both of you. I was in Mott Haven last night and what I saw firsthand is nothing like what you're describing, to be quite honest. This was led by Bronx activists – [inaudible] I watched her get arrested. I listened to her say that people should not destroy the community. She said that if police put hands on us, we'll put them back on them. But at the time this march was [inaudible] it was peaceful. There was not people provoking or causing vandalism or any destruction. And they were explicitly told not to. For the next 30 minutes, I watched

cops push these protesters into this really claustrophobic scene. I was stuck inside of it. I watched a pregnant woman screaming in pain. I saw multiple legal observers thrown on cars and arrested, myself and other reporters were threatened with arrest, and the crowd that was gathered around here was – was shrieking, they were furious. I'm sure maybe Police Commissioner heard otherwise, but I was there for hours, and what I heard was a community that was really shocked by what they saw. This is one of several incidents in which it seems as though, you know, peaceful protesters are getting beaten without provocation. I'm wondering, why do I keep seeing this night after night and what are you doing right now to stop it?

**Mayor:** Jake, I value what you're saying, because I don't accept a peaceful protesters being beaten, period, and I want to be very clear about that. The plan, and it's been the same day after day, that if there's peaceful protest, it is being respected. And I have seen – I've been out right in the middle of these protests, watching constantly hundreds or thousands of people going by, I'm watching how they are comporting themselves and how the NYPD is comporting itself. I was around Brooklyn last night, watching in different places. What I saw overwhelmingly, and have continued to see, is peaceful protest being respected on both sides. There've been some exceptions. Jake, I believe that you believe what you're saying. I also believe that the information Commissioner Shea is putting forward is based on fact, based on both the intention, certainly as some of the people came, and they made their intention clear based on the fact that weapons are recovered. We had observers from City Hall who saw a very different reality than what you saw. We're always watching, but I want to be clear. I will certainly not tolerate any arrest or mistreatment of the media. That's unacceptable and I need to make sure to NYPD does everything involving the media properly. Commissioner Shea and I talked about this – if someone is there in a legal role, they need to be respected. So, there's certainly things that we have to do better, but – and any instance, Jake, that is inappropriate must be fully investigated and acted on. And so, if you say, look, here's something that was inappropriate, you or anyone else, there are very clear methodologies for any individual New Yorker to file a complaint with the Internal Affairs Bureau, the Civilian Complaint Review Board, or both. And those need to be acted on quickly. That's key word – quickly. So, if you or anyone else saw something last night you do not like, we want to know about it and we want to see it investigated. But I also think there's a fundamental problem here that if, overwhelmingly, we're seeing peaceful protest being respected, and then we have individual situations, sometimes that's because of a mistake of an officer or a police officer – excuse me, a commander or a police officer that needs to be addressed, or someone who did something wrong. Sometimes it's because there's a lot more there than meets the eye. And when you're after curfew, you have a threat of violence, you have evidence of violence being intended, and people have been asked to disperse, I want to remind you that those are real conditions that have to be understood. Commissioner, do you want to speak to that?

**Commissioner Shea:** Yeah. Jake, I do appreciate the question. And as the Mayor was talking, I was thinking the exact same thing that, that I hear you, I respect your opinion. I think that – I'm not discounting what you saw, and I believe you that that's what you saw, but sometimes when you're in the middle of something, you don't get to see the big picture too. So, I'll just recount a few [inaudible] details of that incident to you that you may or may not be aware of. You know, we are handling numerous peaceful assemblies throughout the city at any one point in time. Overwhelmingly, they are good people coming out to voice their opinion about a number of issues, most of them dealing with law enforcement that they think is unjust. And again, for the hundredth time, we support them and we're going to protect them. Some of these assemblages are advertising, this is peaceful. Some of them actually go the other direction and say, this is not going to be a peaceful protest, if you're peaceful, don't come. That's exactly what was billed and advertised at 149th Street yesterday. I don't know if you know this – and regardless, I do appreciate and respect your position as a member of the media to be there regardless. But they put

out posters advertising that they were going to burn things down, that they were going to injure cops, that they were going to cause mayhem. That was the plan. We disrupted the plan. There could've been some innocent people caught up in it. I think people are accountable for their own actions too. We all have to step back, exercise a little common sense and say, if there's a place where people are saying there's going to be violence, why would you possibly want to go there?

Even with that, we allowed them to assemble. The Mayor got into the points with the curfew, and I'll just finish with this. Again, sometimes if you're in the middle of it, you can't see what's going on all around you. There's a lot of people there, but we had the information again that was told to us by the organizers, part of this group is the same group that thought it was a good idea in January to destroy the New York City transit system. And they told us what they were going to do. And we intercepted them literally, literally, Jake, as they were bringing a gun and gasoline and weapons to the scene of that. That's actually what happened.

**Mayor:** Thank you.

**Moderator:** Next we have Henry from Bloomberg.

**Question:** Hello, Mr. Mayor. Hello, Police Commissioner Shea. I had some questions, but I'm going to go back to Julia's questions because I don't think they were answered. Number one, what is your position on the growing call for a \$1 billion cut in the NYPD budget? That's number one, and number two, how do you explain this difference in perception between all of these descriptions of excessive force and your description of what's occurring out there on the streets?

**Mayor:** Okay, Henry, I really do feel I answered the previous question, but I'm going to answer it again. I do not believe it is a good idea to reduce the budget of the agency that is here to keep us safe and the agency that is instituting neighborhood policing, which involves getting our officers to be deeply engaged with the community. The work that has happened with neighborhood policing is very labor intensive. It is about building relationships, getting our officers out of their vehicles on patrol on the street, the classic cop on the beat that the neighborhood gets to know and the cop gets to know the neighborhood. I have been all over the city. I've talked to resident association leaders in NYCHA. I have talked to people on the street who talked to me about what it is like to have a relationship with the police officer who serves them. It is a game changer. It is the future of policing. If you undercut that, it's not helpful. We're going to have a negotiation with the City Council as always, but here is the thing that must be remembered. I'm really getting a little troubled that people may not be able to remember a few years ago. Why did we add 2,000 more officers on patrol, why? Why did we add 2,000 more officers on patrol? Because the New York City Council made it the priority that year with its budget, including a lot of the members who are there right now, because they believed their communities needed to be safer, because they were hearing from their communities they wanted more police presence to address their issues. We also believed, I believed, that it would help us create a different model of policing with neighborhood policing.

So, we're going to have a negotiation with the Council as always, and there's going to be a give-and-take, and we're going to think together about a range of options. But if you ask my view – my view is it does not make sense to take away resources from an initiative that actually has been moving us in the right direction. We have been a safer city for six years in a row. We've had a horrible disruption this year on so many levels, but I want those facts to be clear. The bigger problem, Henry, is we may not have a choice. We may be defunding all City agencies if things don't go right in the next three weeks and it's a painful thing to acknowledge, but it's true.

On the question of excessive force, I don't accept, ever, excessive force used inappropriately, period. There's some times where force is needed. There's some times where there's a threat to human life. There's sometimes, as we saw on the horrible events of a Sunday night, Monday night, where people are aiming to destroy the city, of course, they have to be addressed, but I've seen videos. And I've said it immediately, that I don't like, at all, what I see, I don't want to see that in New York City. What we need is full investigation, quick investigation. Where charges are needed, charges need to be brought. And I appreciate what commissioner Shea said yesterday. And I thought it showed a lot of decency and heart and humility, and he admitted there's things the NYPD needs to do better. And I am the first to say, we all, in City government, need to do things better, but he also said that discipline is coming and it's coming quickly. He said very clearly that there are several officers who will be suspended as part of that discipline.

People of this city need to know there are consequences, but we also have to remember the vast majority of cops who are out there doing this work every day and doing it the right way, that is the overwhelming majority. So, where something's wrong, we have ample procedures for that complaint to come forward and be acted on. Now we have to show that the results will be fast and consistent.

**Moderator:** Next we have Gloria from NY1. I'm sorry – apologies, this will be the first of the last two questions today.

**Mayor:** But it is Gloria?

**Moderator:** Yes.

**Question:** Yes, it's Gloria, thank you.

**Mayor:** Hello, Gloria.

**Question:** Hi, Mr. Mayor. I also want to follow up on Rich's question and if I could follow up with an actual answer. I want to ask you again about the curfew, because some cities that have imposed curfew have already canceled it. And I know we saw the looting and the unrest here. But as you have also said, we are now seeing peaceful protests for the most part. Are you thinking about it? Are you considering it that maybe the curfew here is doing more harm than good? I know – I guess it feels like you can't win here and I know that you needed to address what happened earlier in the week. But now it seems like the tension and the arrest is coming because police are seeming to forcefully enforce the curfew. So now we have due process problems and, so, you know, we have members out there negotiating with police about –

**Mayor:** Gloria, so what's your question? What's your question?

**Question:** So why not consider the cancellation of the curfew? And my second question is about discipline, which you have talked about a lot today and about how it's coming and about how fast it's coming. But I want to draw a parallel to the Buffalo situation yesterday, and I assume you haven't seen the video, but it shows an elderly man being pushed to the ground. He bleeds from the head, officers stand there. Those officers have already been suspended. So, what is the status of officers here, for example, the SUV incident? What about all of this isn't letting you take more immediate action, which I think is what some people really want to see? That it's not taking weeks and weeks and weeks of time for consequences –

**Mayor:** Gloria, I got it. So, I agree with everyone who wants to see speedy action, and this is something we have to change in the NYPD. It takes too long, period. I will immediately note that so much of the



energy right now – I don't know what's happening in Buffalo or any place else honestly, I'm just focused here. But so much of the energy now throughout the entire department and City Hall is in making sure we address all of the issues that are happening right now in this very, very painful, difficult, last seven days, there are immense challenges in terms of protecting people's health and safety. That's where our focus is. And that has taken up the kind of time and energy that might normally go into moving on some of these discipline things, issues. But your question is entirely fair. And I, of course, I have eyes to see. If people see in other jurisdictions, immediate action, they don't see it here. It's going to be frustrating.

Now, here, we have a certain approach to due process. We have a certain combination of law and union contracts and a history around due process and investigation. Other places may or may not have that. But whatever our history, we have to change and we have to improve our process and it has to be faster. So, you will see action. I want to see it a lot quicker. I think every place is different. We have a particular approach here that is very much based on the facts, not the superficialities. But that still doesn't answer your very fair underlying point. People are pained when they don't see action on something that before their eyes feels wrong. Sometimes there's a lot more to the story. Sometimes there isn't. But the equal answer is show speed of dealing with it. And then people are going to feel better about it. And this is something we have to fix in the NYPD. And that is my responsibility and Commissioner Shea's responsibility to do it.

Previous answer on a curfew was clear as a bell. Let me repeat it for you. The curfew continues until Sunday. We're always evaluating. Of course, I'm thinking about this stuff all the time, and I'm listening to different concerns that people raise all over the city. And I understand anyone who may say, well, is it more harm than good? And I would say, no, based on what we're seeing, we've had three very good nights, after two really bad nights. You could say, well, after three nights, haven't we proven that everything is exactly right and we're fine? No, I don't think that's the case yet. I will look at all the facts today, but my plan is still my plan to ensure that we have peaceful dynamics in this city over the next days, so we can go into the reopening on Monday.

I would disagree with your assessment. I think in a city of, well, over eight million people, we had, I think a few hundred arrests last night around specific protests. Overwhelmingly, the thousands of people that were out protesting, were treated with absolute deference in terms of, they were not put in a situation where they were peacefully protesting, that they were inhibited. But you got to look at all the factors. What happened on Monday and Sunday night was absolutely unacceptable. And that's the first thing I am solving for. And what we saw last night was an overwhelmingly peaceful city. And we're talking about three more nights to go, which is not a long time in the scheme of things. And all our attention is set on getting Monday up and running. So, there is your answer.

**Moderator:** Last question for today, we have Matt Chayes from Newsday.

**Question:** Hey, good morning all. I just want to ditto what Julia [inaudible] had said regarding follow ups. Two questions for you, sir. How many arrestees have been injured since the protest began last week? If you do not have this number, why not? And second, yes or no. Yes or no, does the NYPD have the right to disperse peaceful protesters or curfew violators by immediate escalation to batons, pepper spray or other physical force absent an additional violation? And would officers have been following policy if they had escalated immediately to impact weapons while arresting your daughter and other protesters for failure to disperse?

**Mayor:** Okay, I'll be very quick because I'm supposed to go on the radio in a moment. On the arrestees injured – the reports I've gotten consistently have been very few serious injuries. Thank God. And we've been asking this question regularly, but we will get you the latest updated figures today. On the question

of how I want to see and how we need to see things proceed with peaceful protest. It should be clear as a bell. That the ground rules and I've been to a lot of protests. The ground rules have to be very clearly stated by police. If they are asking people, for example, to not be in the street, go to the sidewalk or go down another street, there are often, again very specific reasons for that. And the police are there for a reason in our society. If they are respectfully asking protesters to do something, protesters need to honor that request. The ground rules are the ground rules. And peaceful protests will be honored so long as it stays within these legitimate ground rules.

When the officers don't provide those ground rules, when they don't act on those ground rules consistently, that's a problem. And that could lead to discipline. But in the case of a use of force, I don't want to see any use of force. And I watched with my own eyes for days now, no use of force around a peaceful protest that I was seeing in front of my very eyes, right, right there. If people are aiming to do violence, that's an appropriate dynamic to use force. If they do violence, it's an appropriate dynamic. But otherwise I want maximum communication from police. I want minimum intervention, minimum force, lots of restraint. That's what we're seeing. And I've heard plenty of examples of police negotiating, communicating, and getting it right. And that's what we want to see in New York City. And I want us to get past this phase of these painful few days and move forward.

So, with that, everyone, look, it has been a tough time in many ways, but it is a reminder that we have to do something different and something better. And we will, we will. And this is New York City. Every time we are told what we can't do, we prove people wrong. So I go back, I know memories are short, but I am telling you, there was a cacophony in this city starting with the then mayor and police commissioner saying, if we got rid of stop-and-frisk, that broken and unconstitutional approach to stop-and-frisk, that somehow this city would devolve into crime and chaos. The exact opposite happened because we are New Yorkers and when we realize something's unjust, we do something about it. When we realize something's broken, we fix it. There are still too many things in the American approach to policing that are broken. There's too much structural racism. There are things in the NYPD that still need to be fixed. And there needs to be fairness and it needs to be swift. That is my responsibility to achieve, failure is not an option here. And for the next year and a half, I will do that. And I will show you the results for the benefit of all New Yorkers so we can move forward. Thank you.

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